



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

JUL 17 2007

Dear Reviewer:

In accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, we enclose for your review the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Amendment 2 to the Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP).

This DEIS is prepared pursuant to NEPA to assess the environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with NOAA preceding with Amendment 2 to the Consolidated HMS FMP.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is amending the Consolidated HMS FMP based on several stock assessments that were completed in 2005/2006. Assessments for dusky and sandbar shark indicate that these species are overfished with overfishing occurring. Porbeagle sharks are overfished. National Standard 1 of the 2007 Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires Agencies to implement management measures that prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks, as necessary. After considering comments on a scoping presentation and on a predraft document, NMFS is proposing measures that will reduce fishing mortality and effort considerably for Atlantic shark species while ensuring that shark fisheries continue in a sustainable manner. A proposed rule that would implement the DEIS is being released at approximately the same time as this DEIS. Numerous public hearings for both the proposed rule and the DEIS will be held along the Atlantic Coast, including the Caribbean, and in the Gulf of Mexico. The dates and locations of the public hearings will be announced in the Federal Register in the proposed rule.

Additional copies of the DEIS may be obtained from the Responsible Program Official identified below. The document is also accessible electronically through the HMS Management Division's website at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>.

Written comments should be submitted through mail, facsimile (fax), or email to the Responsible Program Official identified below. Written comments must be received by October 10, 2007. When submitting fax or email comments include the following document identifier in the comment subject line: Amendment 2 to the HMS FMP.




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Responsible Program Official:

Alan D. Risenhoover  
Director  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910  
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301-713-0596  
ShkA2@noaa.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rodney Weiler". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Rodney F. Weiler, Ph.D.  
NOAA NEPA Coordinator